

STANLEY,

*February 26th, 1901.*

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present you with my report for the year, 1900.

The district is purely a coal-mining one, and the houses of the workmen are grouped into several villages. These villages were built by mine owners to accommodate the number of workmen required at each respective mine, and their construction took place prior to the formation of any public authority that could exercise control over their erection, as a consequence little regard was paid to the most ordinary and necessary rules of sanitation, and in many instances less to the comfort of the inhabitants. Several houses were only single-roomed, and few exceeded two rooms, and of the latter many consisted only of a room and an attic. The site of each village, however, was generally well selected, and allowed of an easy flow of sewage from the dwellings in the absence of artificial means. Since your Council was formed, steady and persistent improvements have taken place throughout the whole district, and all the most serious sanitary defects been removed. Coal-mining is the staple industry, and on the whole is a healthy one. There are no factories nor trades acting prejudicially on the general health of the inhabitants.

**Dwelling Houses.**—During the course of the year thirty-five new houses for workmen were built; twenty-five of them consisted of single tenemented houses containing four or more rooms with a self-contained cemented yard, the remaining ten were double tenanted, having five rooms with a similar yard common to both. Water is laid into each house, and the whole sanitary surroundings are most satisfactory. The houses are well built and comfortably arranged, but the two-roomed tenements are objectionable for obvious reasons.

The Council being a Sanitary Authority, all plans for new buildings, &c., have to be submitted for their approval, and all work is carried out under the supervision of their Surveyor.



With regard to old property, there are no large blocks of houses crowded together, and the few small blocks not intended originally for dwellings have ample yard or air space. Amongst the large number of improvements that have been carried out the following were of the most important, viz. :—Under the Housing of the Working Classes Act, twenty-nine insanitary houses were dealt with. Three situated at White-le-Head, two at Tantobie, and one at Toft Gate were closed and afterwards reconstructed, but without any additional room accommodation. One at Mountsett was closed and demolished, and it was necessary to obtain a Magistrate's Order to enforce the closure of another at White-le-Head. Twelve at Lintz, and three at Esther Pit underwent structural alterations, and were made habitable. The remaining six are in process of being repaired.

Owing to colliery subsidences and natural decay, minor defects were numerous, and required considerable attention on the part of the Inspector. A large number of notices were given for the removal of petty defects and nuisances, and it is gratifying to state that they invariably received prompt attention. There are about seventy dwellings having only a single room, half of them belong to the colliery owners, the other half are owned privately. In the matter of tenants for those houses, the former generally use some discrimination in making a selection, the latter don't always exercise the same care.

**Out-Offices.**—Very few water-closets are in use. The form of out-office attached to new houses consists of a privy and ashpit—practically an ash closet for single tenants and two privies with an intervening ashpit for double tenants. They are covered and cemented, and excretive matters mingle readily with ashes, and what is of equal importance they are easily cleansed. Re-constructed houses have the same kind of convenience. Those connected with old property were either open privy-middens or an ashpit at the door with a privy some distance off. Being uncovered they were at times uncleanable, but more frequently the fluid contents percolated into the subsoil and if not injurious to health were at least very objectionable. A number of the first-mentioned kind have been replaced by the more modern structures, notably at Lintz Colliery and the Causey. Those with privy and ashpit apart exist chiefly in Hobson and Tanfield Lea. In the former village it is intended to reconstruct them shortly, in the latter they will probably not be interfered with at present.





**Sewers and Sewage Disposal.**—The Lintz Village has been re-sewered and the connections, including trapped sinks, were attached, and the sewage conveyed to Friarside outlet. A sewer was laid into Middle Friarside and joined to the same outlet. The Causey Rows have also been sewered and a couple of filter beds will be constructed shortly, sufficient for the treatment of the small amount of sewage. To meet the increasing flow of sewage into Tantobie outfall works, they have been thoroughly overhauled and two supplementary bacterial tanks added. It only remains to provide a whole system for the village of Tanfield Lea to practically complete the district.

**Scavenging and Removal of Refuse.**—The Council undertakes the responsibility of providing for the cleansing of the district, and the work is done in a systematic manner and most efficiently. Suitable places for deposit have been procured, and the refuse is removed by contract, under the supervision of the Inspector. Almost the entire district is supplied with an abundance of excellent water from the works of the Consett Water Company. The water is collected in reservoirs on the Fells from sources not likely to be tainted by any dangerous impurity. The local supply has been for some time limited to isolated cottages and farm houses, and this supply is decreasing—due chiefly to colliery subsidences—to be replaced from the main source. A well supplying Beamish Red Row was closed owing to its impurity, and resupplied in the manner stated. The occupants of a block of houses situated at Dyke Heads, although not in very urgent need, would still be greatly benefited by having the water laid on the premises.

All slaughter houses are carefully attended to, and no charge of causing a nuisance has been made against them.

There are no bakeries requiring examination.

No licensed lodging house exists.

Cowsheads and Dairies were examined and found in very good order. Dairies are only used for the storage of milk for home consumption, the bulk is carted off and distributed night and morning. Farmers are the chief purveyors of milk, and their method of feeding and treating their cows is in and out door as circumstances allow. The smaller dealers rent sufficient land to enable them to follow the same plan, hence the regulations of the Registration Act are not quite so applicable as in stall fed cattle. The Registration Act, however, might be adopted with advantage.



No proceedings have been necessary under the Food and Drugs Act.

**Overcrowding.**—There was and is yet a great demand for workmen's houses, with the result that overcrowding still exists, but not nearly to the extent revealed by your Inspector's house to house visitation report. A large number of notices were served, and unavoidable overcrowding was fairly satisfactorily remedied. In the case of a single roomed house there remains an unavoidable form, as it were. If your Council adopted the Housing of the Working Classes Act, it would be the means of removing the principal causes for overcrowding.

Admitting the great improvement that has taken place recently in the construction of workmen's houses, those consisting only of two rooms have not sufficient accommodation to meet the requirements of ordinary family home life. In the event of sickness a room should always be available, not only for the purpose of isolation in case of infectious disease, but to keep apart as much as possible those suffering from certain constitutional diseases that can be imparted to the healthy by constant contact, also for the better treatment of the numerous accidents that occur in mining districts. There are moral obligations also to be considered. In the ordinary routine of family life occasions arise that require a certain amount of privacy, and this can scarcely be obtained in a two-roomed house where the family is composed of various ages and sexes. How much more undesirable must it be, and even at times repugnant to those occupying a single-roomed house.

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### ***NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.***

The number of cases of notifiable diseases reported throughout the past year amounted to 91, and these consisted of 86 Scarlatina, 1 of Typhoid Fever, 1 of Diphtheria, 1 of Puerperal Fever, and 2 of Erysipelas. The number for the previous year being only 39. The difference was entirely due to the prolonged epidemic of Scarlatina during the former year.

**Scarlatina.**—Practically the whole County of Durham has been over-run with a mild form of Scarlatina. The disease made its appearance in February by importation from an adjoining district, and cases continued unceasingly up to the end of the year.



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The epidemic never assumed large proportions, nor did it seriously interfere with the attendance at School. The type of disease presented the same mild characteristics throughout the entire outbreak, and only two fatalities resulted.

**Enteric Fever.**—In mining villages, Typhoid Fever is a very common disease, and any outbreak, if followed by a succession of cases, is generally associated with some sanitary imperfections. The fact that only a single case appeared is a most satisfactory record. Nothing was discovered to account for its origin.

**Diphtheria.**—The only case of this malady caught the infection outside the district, and prompt isolation ended the outbreak.

**Puerperal Fever.**—Only one case of this disease was notified. There is always a doubt of its specific character when it arises *de novo* as it were.

**Erysipelas.**—Two cases of this disease occurred, and neither propagated any infection. Suitable disinfectants were promptly supplied and instructions given how to apply them. Isolation was insisted upon where it was practicable, but scarcely in a single instance could it be carried out in its entirety. For example, in the second or convalescent stage Scarlatina recovery took place quickly, and the patient was out and about some time before the infective period had ended, but the application of strong carbolized soap appeared to be effective in destroying infection. Admission to the Isolation Hospital was offered to all suitable cases and declined, chiefly on the grounds that the long distance the patient had to be conveyed might cause unnecessary suffering. Greater efforts should be made to complete the Isolation Hospital now in course of erection. The present rate of progress will take years to finish it.

## ***NON-NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.***

**Measles** began and ended with a solitary case that terminated fatally. Its source was not discovered.

**Whooping Cough** invaded the district in March, and continued until the end of August. Approximately the number would reach from fifty to sixty cases, with four fatalities. The outbreak began at Burnopfield, and its area of extension did not extend any great distance from that village. The epidemic was a passive one.



**Diarrhœa** was never prevalent, but a form of Gastro Enteritis somewhat resembling it prevailed during the hot weather. The mortality was slight

**Influenza** appeared occasionally, and the death returns show that two succumbed.

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### **VITAL STATISTICS.**

The number of births registered during the year amounted to 318, giving a birth rate of 35·3, and the deaths to 141, giving a death rate of 15·66, estimating the population at 9,000. The birth and death rates for the previous year were slightly more favourable. Zymotic Diseases gave a total of 10, consisting of the following, viz. :—Scarlatina, 2 ; Puerperal Fever, 1 ; Erysipelas, 1 ; Whooping Cough, 4, and Diarrhœa, 2 ; being about 7 per cent. of the whole deaths, and a zymotic death rate of slightly over 1 per 1,000 of the population.

There is no ~~st~~atement of the high infantile mortality from past years ; 61 deaths occurred under the age of one year, and 13 between one and five years. The former accounts for over a third and the addition of the latter shows that half of the deaths take place under the age of five years. Infectious diseases play a small part in infantile mortality, only 7 succumbed to the various kinds, whereas exactly double the number fell victims to Tubercle. Both diseases, and to a certain extent several other complaints would have a lessened mortality if better house accommodation was provided. Efforts are being made all over the Kingdom to deal with Phthisis and other tuberculous diseases, and the little assistance your Council can give has already been pointed out. Deaths during the past year from both causes were 21 at all ages.

Government Forms attached consist of Table I, giving population and area with the number of births and deaths for the past five years. Table III gives all cases of Infectious Diseases notified during the year 1900. Table IV causes of, and ages at, death during the year 1900. The most important requirements of the district are a complete system of Sewage for Tanfield Lea, replacement of the objectionable Out-offices by an improved pattern, and more and better housing for workmen.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

*T. BENSON,*

Medical Officer.

*The Urban District Council,  
Tanfield.*







TANFIELD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

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# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THIS

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE

~ YEAR 1900. ~

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STANLEY,

*February 26th, 1901.*

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